

# The Stiles Patent Jug



James L. Murphy

Contributions to Ohio Ceramic History

No. 13

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Grove  Lucky Press

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Grove City, Ohio

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## Introduction

The latter decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century witness a remarkable amount of activity directed at improving the design of stoneware jugs, and one invention by an imaginative Cleveland, Ohio, tinsmith ingeniously addressed two problems simultaneously—the ability to conserve space both in the kiln and in shipping by improving the jug’s “stackability” and improvements to the problem of splashing or “gurgling” when the contents of the finished product were poured.

While many inventors approached the problem by improving the degree to which jugs could be stacked vertically one above another, either in a normal

position or inverted, Henry Stiles (1860-1943) opted to stack his tin jugs on their sides. This of course required flat sides, resulting in a banjo-shaped container, as shown by his jug patent. It appears that Stiles' invention occurred in several steps; certainly he developed more than one patent pertaining to his innovations.

Some of the material available on Henry Stiles and his patent jug has been published previously in several articles by Jack Sullivan (1993, 1994, n. d.) but considerably more information has become available and is presented herein, while various errors are corrected.

The efforts of Maureen Pergola to introduce me to the intricacies of the Cuyahoga County Archives is especially appreciated.

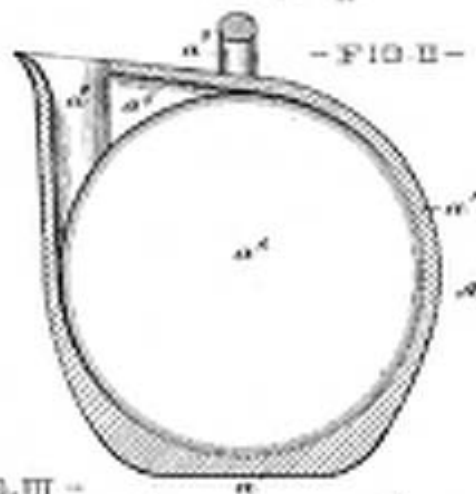
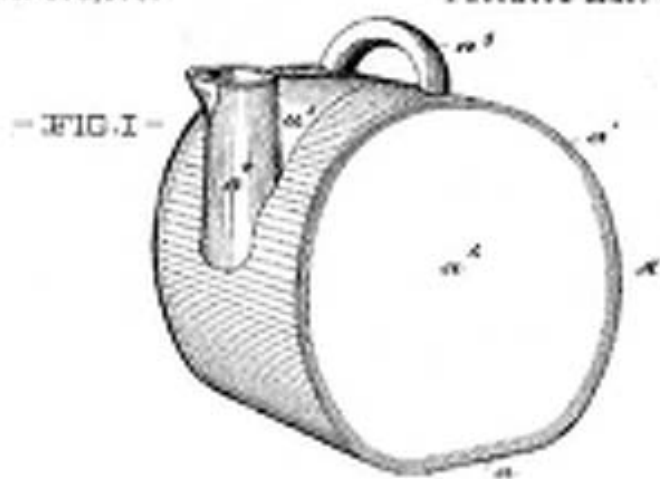
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H. STILES.

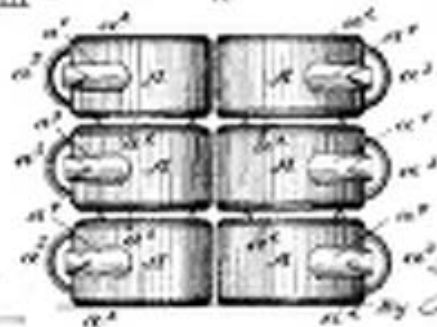
109.

No. 578,370.

Patented Mar. 9, 1897.



- FIG. III -



WITNESSES,

*J. C. Turner,*  
*W. J. Fisher*

INVENTOR,

*H. Stiles*  
*Shelby J. Day*

Stiles' 1897 Patent

## **Before Cleveland**

It has been suggested that Stiles may have been related to Cleveland pioneer Job Stiles and his wife, Tabitha, who accompanied a surveying party to the site in 1796, although admittedly it is not known whether Henry Stiles was directly related to these pioneers (Sullivan n. d.). Actually, Stiles' grandfather, also Henry Stiles, is listed in the 1851 census for Lullingstone Parish, Kent, England, aged 50, with children Emma V., 20, Henry S., aged 19, and Stephen aged 14. The father was a "retiring farmer employing 10 labourers," but by 1860 we find him listed as a "domestic," living with his daughter Edyth in North Bloomfield, Trumbull Co., Ohio. Another of his sons, Edward V. Stiles, was born in England

around 1834, but migrated to Troy Township, Delaware Co., Ohio by 1860, when the census lists him as a butcher, with wife Eunice, daughter Sarah, and five-month-old son Henry. By 1863 the family had moved slightly to the west, to Richwood, Union Co., where the younger Henry had been born and where the elder Henry Stiles would die in 1869. The 1870 census lists the following: Edward, 36, Eliza [his second wife], 26, Sarah E. 12, Henry 10, and Ann 8. Listed in a separate household is the recently married Henry S. Stiles, also a butcher, aged 38 and Edward's younger brother, who had emigrated in 1853. 1880 would find Henry S. Stiles still in Richwood, a clerk in a butcher shop, with wife Clara and children Wilfrid, Harold, and Arthur G. He was later "the stately and pleasant-faced Superintendent of U. S. mails" at

the N. Y. P. Y O. Railroad station in Richwood but by 1900 was an insurance agent, still living in Richwood. The family moved to Massachusetts in 1908, where Henry S. died in 1914 and Mrs. Stiles in 1924 (Richwood *Gazette*, November 3, 1887 and August 14, 1924).

Circumstances had changed drastically for his nephew Henry's family by 1880, however, for Edward V. was deceased, having been hit by a train while walking along the railroad at Woodland, four miles east of Richwood, Ohio, March 2, 1875. The newspaper account indicated that Stiles was a bit too fond of the bottle and remained unaware of the oncoming locomotive until it was too late (Marysville *Tribune*, March 10, 1875). No doubt as a result of Edward's death his other brother Stephen and sister Edith

Stiles migrated to the United States, arriving June 4, 1875. Upon Edward's death, Stephen became guardian for the three older children (by Edward's first wife), and by 1880 Stephen and Edith were living on Superior Avenue, in Cleveland, with niece Sarah E. and 20 year old nephew Henry, who was employed as a tinner (Union County Probate Court, Case File 2039; 1880 U.S. Federal Census).

## **Cleveland**

The 1884/1885 Cleveland directory lists Henry as a tinner living on the south side of Wade Park near Norwood but by the following year he is at 485 Giddings, while the 1887 directory lists [Alex.] McDonald & Stiles, Manufacturers of Tin Ware, Tin Lithographing and Japanning, 15 1/2 Frankfort.





Stiles Family Monument  
Oak Grove Cemetery, Delaware, Ohio



Henry retained some ties with the relatives in Richwood, as indicated by a fulsome article appearing in the Richwood *Gazette* of November 8, 1887. The article credits Stiles with inventing “a great industry,” specifically the art of tin lithography. According to the *Gazette*, Stiles’ discovery and invention of the process “has made his name famous in the scientific and manufacturing world and has started him on the road of fortune.” A “Mr. McDonald” is also mentioned, undoubtedly the Alex. McDonald who moved to San Francisco. In 1886 they employed fifteen men producing the tin work but disposed of the firm to the Lithograph Tin Ware Co. of C. E. and W. P. Haldeman. In March 1887 the plant was moved to Champlain Street, where forty hands were employed making such items as lithographed tobac-

co cans and cans for coach and harness oils. Charles E. and Willard P. Haldeman were primarily engaged in the oil business, however, and the company does not seem to have lasted long.

According to the 1888 city directory, McDonald had moved to San Francisco, while Stiles had become foreman at the Lithograph and Tin Ware Co. operated by Charles E. and Willard P. Haldeman. Uncle Stephen Stiles is listed at 482 Giddings and both Stiles entries are the same in the 1888/1889 directory. The 1890 directory simply lists Henry as “tinner” and from 1890-1891 through 1892-1893 as “foreman,” while Stephen is now (1891-1892) listed as “salesman.” (Sullivan unaccountably states of Henry that “in the census of 1890, he listed his

occupation as "foreman," unaccountable since the 1890 census for Cuyahoga Co. has not been preserved.)

## **The Stiles Slanting Spout Company**

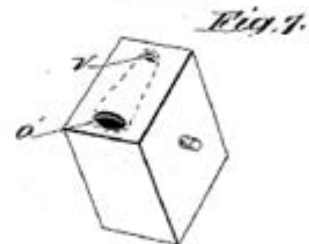
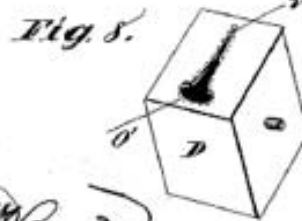
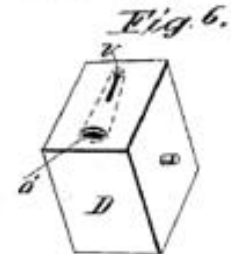
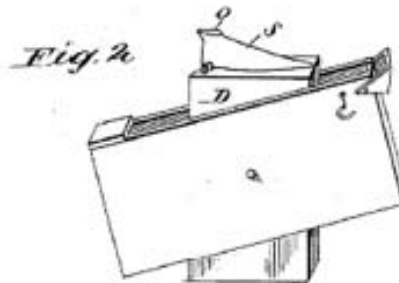
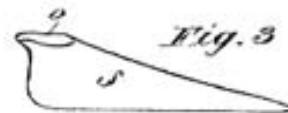
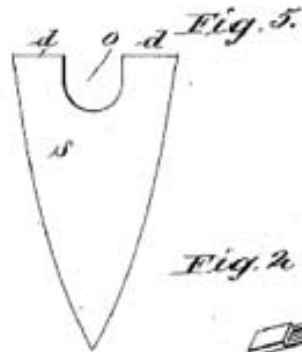
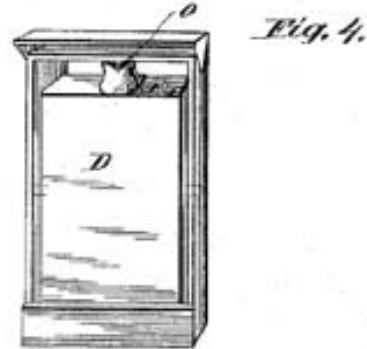
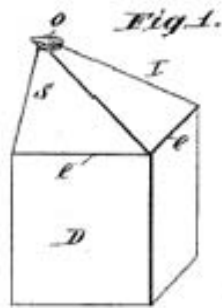
December 15, 1891, Henry Stiles, of Cleveland, applied for a patent on a "Spout for Cans." This was granted May 10, 1892 (U. S. Patent No. 474, 507). Stiles accurately described his innovation as "self-ventilating, as the spout and vent were integrated in a single feature, a slanting, covered apparatus that removed the likelihood of splashing and gurgling as the contents were poured. It also provided a savings in energy and presumably cost of creating a distinct vent separate from the spout, although the spout did require soldering to attach it to the can top. Stiles' patent illustrations show a spout and vent and even a pattern-

(No Model.)

H. STILES.  
SPOUT FOR CANS.

No. 474,507.

Patented May 10, 1892.



Witnesses  
Chas. H. Stiles  
Chas. H. Stiles

Inventor,  
Henry Stiles,  
by George Loring  
Attorney.

piece from which the spout could be formed. Stiles claimed that the protective spout actually strengthened the lid top and could accommodate and protect both a combined orifice and vent as well as a separate orifice and vent. Significantly, Stiles reiterated that his invention was a *can* for oil or other liquids.

The Stiles Slanting Spout Co. was incorporated in Illinois on January 28, 1893, by Stephen Stiles, William Pate, and a George W. Wing, with capitalization of \$100,000, "for the manufacture of cans, vessels, jars, carboys, bottles, and other receptacles." (Chicago *Tribune* January 29, 1893, p. 16. Currently, the earliest local reference to the Stiles Slanting Spout Company is the 1893-94 Cleveland dir-

ectory, in which Henry is listed as vice-president and Stephen as president of the Stiles Slanting Spout Co., 62 Michigan, “jugs.” William Pate was listed as secretary but there is no mention of Wing, and nothing more is known of him. Pate is listed in the 1900 census as a real estate agent in Cleveland. In 1894 and 1895, Henry Stiles is listed as treasurer of the company and no vice-president is listed. Cuyahoga County deed records (Nos. 120851, 120852) record the June 11, 1894, purchase by the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. of Sublots 9 and 33 and a portion of Sublot 34 in Fowler, Critchley & Corlett’s subdivision in Newburgh Township.

These two deeds however, superceded two earlier deeds (113351, 113352) recorded in mid-December 1893, both of which included an interesting proviso:

“The main consideration of this conveyance is...that said grantee, its successors and assigne, will within three years from the date hereof [December 15, 1893] erect on said premises a building suitable for manufacturing purposes and shall have at or before that time all machinery in place, which business shall be of such a kind and character as will furnish twenty five men with constant employment, and that at least that number of men will be employed therein, at that time, and that manufacturing business shall be carried on therein for a period of seven years from and after November 27 1896.”

Failure to maintain that level of employment would result in forfeiting the land to the to the grantor (Edwin Fowler). Additional provisos prohibited any manu-

facturing that would emit noxious, unhealthy or foul smelling gases, steam, or vapor, and no acid phosphate or fertilizing works would be allowed. (Cuyahoga Deed Records 565: 268-69). These strictures undoubtedly were made to protect the value of adjacent residential lots in the Fowler, Critchley & Corlett Subdivision.

By this time (1893/94) the firm very possibly was marketing jugs with Stiles' patented slanting spout, although this is not certain. Production may have been limited to tin ware. What is believed to be the earliest known example is a typical rounded jug form with the 1892 patent date in a unique design that simply says Stiles Patent Jug/ Cleveland,/ Ohio. Whether this or any stoneware jugs were made at the 62 Michigan address is not known. Both the 1886 and 1896 Sanborn



fire insurance maps show only a liquor establishment associated with the Striebinger House hotel at this address and, although it certainly would be convenient to have a jug factory next door, this was probably the office for the company. The 1896-97 directory indicates that the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. had removed to Corlett Station, which at the time was outside the corporation limits of Cleveland in the Miles community.





Rare Rounded Jug Form with Stiles  
Patent Spout

Variations in paste and glaze might suggest that the company marketed jugs manufactured by other local potteries prior to moving to Corlett Station, but there is no real evidence for this idea and it seems unlikely. It is even possible that no stoneware jugs were made prior to the move to Corlett Station.

Although the company had purchased land at Corlett Station (late 1893 and early 1894), *Clay Record* (November 28, 1896) reported that “W. H. Styles and William Pate of Cleveland have leased the terra cotta brick plant at Bucyrus for one year with an option of buying the land any time within the year for \$10,000.” The works had been idle for several years. Styles and Pate intended to manufacture jugs and expected to have a work force of 20 skilled laborers in thirty

days. Elsewhere in the same issue *Clay Record* more succinctly reported that “H. M. Stiles, of Cleveland, and other capitalists, are going to purchase the terra cotta works at Bucyrus, and start up a jug factory.” This plan apparently was never seen through to completion. A possible rationale for the proposed move is suggested in the next section.

### **The Cleveland Pottery Company**

*Brick* reported in January, 1898, that the Cleveland Pottery Co. had been formed at Chicago with \$50,000 capital. An incomplete but still very illuminating series of fortuitously preserved letters between the Cleveland Pottery Co. and the Bonnot Co., of Canton, Ohio, suppliers of clay manufacturing machinery, sheds further light on the difficulties of the new company.

Particularly interesting is the earliest letter, November 25, 1897, which refers to The Cleveland Pottery Co., J. F. Conard, secretary, as “formerly The Stiles Slanting Spout Co.” Conard is listed as a student in the 1895 Cleveland city directory but no further trace of him as been found after this 1897/98 correspondence, which he signs variously as Secretary or Secretary and Treasurer.

November 25<sup>th</sup>, Conard refers to a previous order about which they have heard nothing and indicates they “are somewhat in a hurry” to have the order filled or will place it elsewhere.

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, Conard ordered additional equipment, including a small variable Speed Jolly with 14” head, a Knowles Double Belt, a Steam Whirler, a



# THE CLEVELAND POTTERY COMPANY

Manufacturers of  
all kinds of . . . .

## STONEWARE

Also STILES PATENT HORSE SHOE JUGS.

Office and Works at  
CORLETT STATION, MILES AVENUE.

Cleveland, O. Nov 25th 1897

The Bonnot Co  
Canton Ohio  
Gentlemen

We wrote you a few days ago in regard to Ordering Machinery for our works and have heard nothing from you. We are about to place an order and are somewhat in a hurry for it and if you wish to sell we would be pleased to hear from you and receive quotations. Otherwise we will place our order elsewhere. Your early attention to this matter will oblige us.

Very truly  
The Cleveland Pottery Co.  
J. F. Howard, Pres.  
Formerly The Stiles Patent Horse Shoe Co.

Color Mill with L. & T Pulleys, 72 Rubber Gaskets, 72 Duck Sacks, 10 Round Grooved Champers for Old Style Piece. Superintendent Mr. Stiles had decided the company's old plunger would work for a time and that a new one could be acquired as business increased. Conard stressed the urgency: "Please hurry this order as fast as possible as we are about ready for the machinery. ... We may if our orders come in fast order another jolly and exchange one we have here..."

On December 7<sup>th</sup> Conard noted that the Disk and Variable Speed had been received and they would like Bonnot to put in a Rubber with Leather Surface. Same as the Jigger to be sent with Friction Pulley to fit shaft on variable speed, same size as pulley on new one,

and to be shipped with new machinery and include charges in invoice of new machinery. As for the Double pulldown previously ordered they would like to have the device the same as the other pull down in the Bonnot Catalogue so that ribs can be changed quickly. The device, Conard thought, was commonly called a dog. One for each rib, same furnished The Quaker Valley Pottery Rogers Ohio. He thought 25 would be needed. Please *hustle* the orders along. We are ready for you and want to start the works soon as possible.

More than two weeks later, December 27<sup>th</sup>: ...The delay on the Jolly and color mill has delayed us a great deal and we are all fitted up to run and have been for nearly two weeks and it is a great damage to us as our men are here, an expense to



us it being our fault they do not work. You promised to fill our order by the 10<sup>th</sup> of Dec. It is now the 27<sup>th</sup>. We are not through ordering machinery yet. This order we gave was for only enough to start up with our Plunger we had [and] is only for the present and will not keep us going. But just now we need the balance of our order, that is the jolly and Color mill at once. We also want in addition ... three or four burr stones for glaze mill, 8 x 10 x 6". That is 8" wide 6" high 10" long. Send with balance, also Disc & parts of old jolly we sent.

The New Year would bring little or no satisfaction:

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1898. "We have heard nothing from you in regard to the balance of our order. We depended upon your promise to ship on a certain date and

fitted up ready to work. If you had shipped the Jolly we could have had it set up and Ribs made ready to run and you could have sent the rubbers afterwards and also the color mill could have been put in place. We do not think you are using us fairly to say the least. Your money is ready at any time if you are afraid of that part of it. We do not like to be writing like this but now having placed our order we would not gain time by going elsewhere. Please give this your attention. We are not through fitting up yet and only want to get our works going with the present order and finish while running. An early reply will oblige.”

Undoubtedly there is a gap in the correspondence, for the next and last letter available is dated February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1898: “Yours of the 3rd to hand saying

you would ship a plain jolly in exchange for the one we have. Please do so without delay and an idler with it Everything all ready to set up. We will keep the double Pull down and use it with the common jolly. Also please send the spindle and head you have for the old jolly. Make the spindle to fit the head you are making. Hurry these along together. Don't delay a minute. We cannot use the one we have very long at a time. It is a serious loss to us. Our man can not put in a full day on it as he has to stop to adjust it and run slow to avoid putting it out of order. Please give this your prompt attention..."





Rare Cleveland Pottery Co. "Stiles Jug"

Much of the technical jargon in this series of letters reads like technical gibberish today but what still comes through loud and clear is Conard's frustration at the delays in Bonnot's equipment delivery. This anxiety was probably due solely to the stress of having to pay idle laborers and the potential loss of business. It might be thought that there was still a looming threat of having the property revert to the original owner, due to the covenant in the original deed, but the requirement to employ at least 25 workmen had been removed from the revised deeds of June, 1894. It remains unclear whether the pottery had already been in production at Corlett when the difficulties with the Bonnot Co. developed or whether the resultant delay was preventing their initial production here. The latter scenario is

unlikely since Henry Stiles (or Mrs. Stiles) purchased land at Corlett as early as 1893 and it is not likely that it would have taken four years or more to get the plant into production.

This extended correspondence is also useful in distinguishing the Cleveland Pottery Company from the Cleveland *Stoneware* Co., which was incorporated in Ohio on June 19, 1898 with \$12,000 stock (Ohio Secretary of State Annual Report for 1898: 408). The incorporators were Otto F. and John Kadow, Frank W. Power, Christopher F. Mackin, and John S. Noonan. Nothing more is known of this business venture but biographical details gleaned from the 1900 federal census suggest a motley crew, none of whom knew much about pottery manufacturing: the Kadows, father (John)

and son (Otto), were night watchman and a mail carrier, respectively; Frank W. Power happened to be John Kadow's son-in-law and was a cashier; Christopher Mackin was another mail carrier; the three John Noonans listed were a patrolman, a painter, and a teamster. Since none is no of these men appear to have had any experience in ceramics, this may help explain why no record of this apparently stillborn Cleveland Pottery Co. has been found. No connection between this firm and the Stiles company can be established.

Finally, in regard to the precise location of the pottery at Corlett Station, the transition from the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. to the Cleveland Pottery Co., and the demise of the Cleveland Pottery Co., Cuyahoga County deed records are of considerable interest.

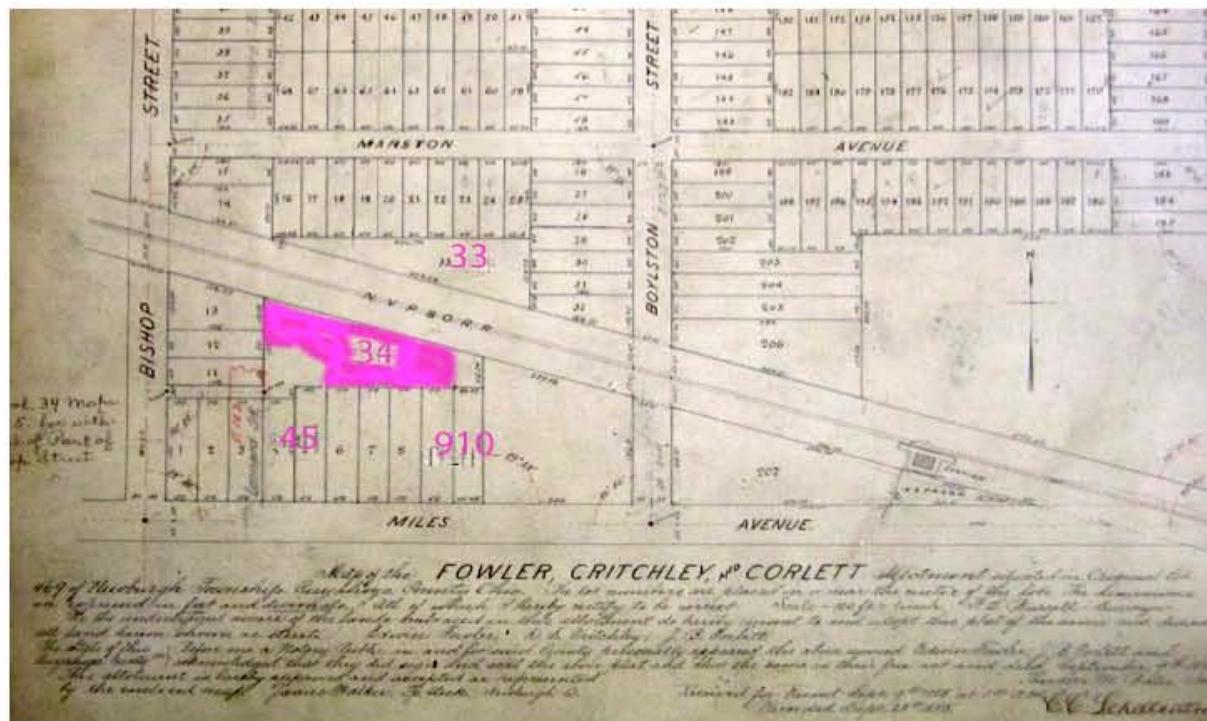
In February 1894, Fowler sold Sublot 4 to Stephen Stiles and Sublot 5 to Ellen Stiles (Cuyahoga Co. Deed Book 557: 496 and 564: 489) and in June he sold Sublot 9 to the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. The pottery also purchased much of Sublot 34, essentially the land north of Sublots 5 through 9 and extending north to the line of the Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad, as well as all of Sublot 33, which lies on the north side of the railroad. Presumably the plant lay here on one or both sides of the railroad. (These are the parcels originally purchased in November 1893.) In late December, 1897, the Cleveland Pottery Co. (successor to Stiles Slanting Spout Co.) sold Sublot 9 back to Fowler (Deed Book 676: 283-284. At the same time Fowler sold a portion of the west half of Sublot 34 to the Cleveland Pottery Co., which would provide access to Leonard



Street. (Deed Book 676: 282). V. C. Taylor and H. H. Baxter, trustees for the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. also sold at this time real estate located in East Cleveland (Rosemere) to the Cleveland Pottery Co.

The plethora of deed records is very complicated, as the Stiles appeared to engage in numerous real estate transactions unrelated to the pottery, particularly involving those lots fronting on Miles Avenue. For example, Ellen Stiles sold Sublot 5 to Ellen McBride in early 1897 but bought it in back in 1900. In May, 1909, Ellen and Henry Stiles sold the southern part of Sublots 4 and 5 back to Fowler. There were also numerous transactions in what was then the Rosemere area of East Cleveland.

The critical record is found in Deed Book 841, p. 124, where it is recorded that the Board of Directors on April 19, 1901, unanimously agreed to sell the Cleveland Pottery Co. to Frank Sager for \$3600. The parcel extended from the northwest corner of Sublot 10 northward to the N. Y. P. and O. railroad tracks, and



Fowler, Critchley & Corlett Subdivision  
and Stiles/Cleveland Pottery Parcel  
(Cuyahoga Co. Maps 13: 10)

then northwesterly along the south edge of the railroad property to Leonard St.; south on Leonard 78 feet, thence east 50 feet and southeasterly 50 feet more to the prolongation of the east line of Sublot 5, at a point 50 feet north of the southern line of Sublot 34, and finally east along this line to the place of beginning. Reference to the map on p. 32 provides an indication of the boundaries of this tract.

Included with the property transfer were boilers, engines, pulleys, and shaftings as well as other property, “excepting and reserving ... the barn, kiln, and pottery machinery,” which the Cleveland Pottery Co. reserved the right to remove within one year. Signatories on the deed were John B. Corlett and Will S. Reed, president and secretary, respectively.

This deed would seem to provide a rather firm end date for production of pottery at the Corlett Site and it is not believed that the Cleveland Pottery Co. moved elsewhere. John B. Corlett we have already met, Frank Sager was a sewer contractor, and Secretary William S. Reed, unsurprisingly, was, like Corlett, a real estate agent, both happening to live on nearby Marston Avenue, which supports the contention that the pottery had become something of a real estate company by this time.

## **Recherché Ware**

Available examples of Stiles jugs provide a variety of marks, most of which have been noted previously by Sullivan (1993, 1994, n.d.), but there remains some question about the dating and even the sequence of the various jug forms as

well as, to a lesser extent, the sequence of the marks. In particular, we are left wondering precisely when and for how long Stiles' Recherche Ware was produced. Oddly enough, there are no known contemporary references to Stiles' Recherche Ware other than the marked jugs themselves.

Sullivan (1993) connects Stiles' use of the French adjective "recherché" (which he simply defines as "re-search") with both Art Nouveau and with the phenomenon that became known as "the Cleveland School." This is a bit of a stretch and invites, if it does not demand, something of a digression on the use of the term "recherché."

In Norfolk, Virginia, for example, *The Jewish South* reported a *Recherche Chocolataire* at the residence of Mesdames

Isaac Feuchtler and Nathan Metzger” (February 11, 1898), and an “at home” in Flagstaff, Arizona, was described as “one of the most pleasant and recherche social entertainments ever given in this city.” (Coconino *Sun*, August 6, 1898). Some years earlier, Mrs. W. A. Reid of Paris [Kentucky] gave an enterainment in elocution described as a recherché affair (Frankfort *Roundabout*, May 9, 1891). The meaning of the term seems to have ranged from modish and fashionable to the elegant, exquisite, and the (slightly) outré. Newspapers not only eschewed the accent but also quickly drained the faddish term of any specific meaning, turning it into a weak joke: “‘Rockabilt gave a very select dinner the other night, I understand.’ ‘Yes; very *recherche*.’ ‘Ah? I thought it might have been *re-Sherry-che*, don’t you know.’” (Lincoln Nebr-

aska *Courier*, January 30, 1897). The adjective rather quickly became a synonym for the pretentious and overblown. Regardless, Stiles selected a brand name that was unique and popular for its time. Regrettably, that time spans the 1890s, so that in itself “recherché” provides no real clue as to when it was adopted by Stiles.

Sullivan assumes that this occurred relatively late, *after* creation of the Cleveland Pottery Company (which he incorrectly assigns to the 1870s) but he is no more specific than stating “Sometime during the period 1892-1898, Stiles’ invention found a home with the Cleveland Pottery Company whose offices were at Corlett Station on Miles Avenue.” Yet, as we have seen, this Cleveland Pottery Co. was not created

until late 1897 and was “formerly the Stiles Slanting Spout Co.” What is more, there is no evidence, documentary or otherwise, that the Cleveland Pottery Co. produced Recherche Ware, as the company letterhead refers only to “Stiles Patent Horse Shoe Jugs.”

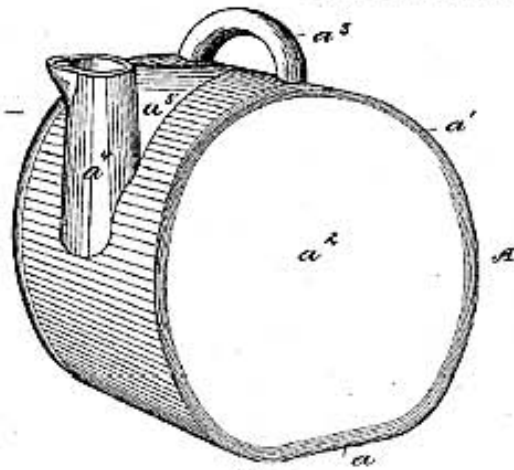
Although this interpretation may be correct, it seems likely that the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. was producing earthenware jugs from at least 1893 until its move to Corlett Station and the formation of the Cleveland Pottery Co. For one thing, the Recherche jugs are significantly more common than the “horseshoe jugs” with the 1897 patent date. Furthermore, the only examples of Stiles’ horseshoe-shaped jugs bearing a Cleveland Pottery mark (and the later 1897 patent date) are composed of heavy



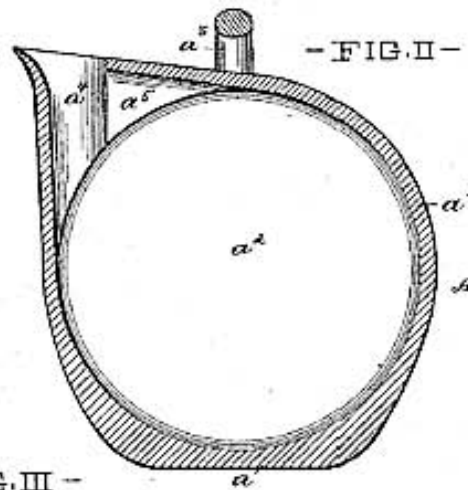
stoneware and are not marked “Recherché Ware.” While circumstantial evidence, this also suggests that the Recherché Ware was earlier; for another thing, the total absence of the 1897 patent date on the Recherché Ware in itself strongly indicates that the Recherché Ware dates before that year. Also compelling is the fact that only the Cleveland Pottery examples were actually fired lying on their sides (which explains the unglazed rim along the periphery of the horseshoe design, for this was the chief innovation of his “improved jug.” Available examples of Recherché Ware were fired in the more usual upright position, usually (though not always) leaving the base unglazed.

Available Recherché Ware jugs show some elaboration, although the only element that might qualify as Art Nouv-

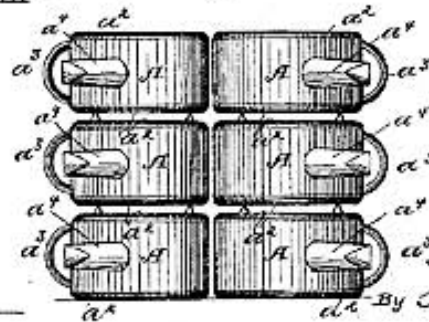
- FIG. I -



- FIG. II -



- FIG. III -



WITNESSES

*J. C. Turner,*  
*H. J. Lecher*

INVENTOR,

*H. S. Sales*  
By *Hall & Fay*  
*Atty's.*

Styles 1897 Patent.  
Note the Stacking Arrangement

eau is the occasional use of an artsy-swirly handle on a smaller (5" high) that seems a bit too delicate and cumbersome on larger forms. Nor is the embossed horseshoe design-- hardly an art nouveau feature-- always present around the sides of the jug. One fancy miniature (3" high) Stiles Patent Recherche Ware jug has opposite sides embossed with a five leave clover and the head of Christ, somewhat blurring the line between good luck and salvation. Another has been seen with the embossed head of a dog, enhanced with a light brown glaze.

Another line of investigation is the various firms known to have used Stiles Recherche Ware jugs for advertising. Unfortunately, these are very seldom encountered: those known include George P. Herman, Grocer, Cleveland, Ohio; J. T.







### “Fancy” Recherche Jugs

Dickerson, Grocer, Salem, Ohio; William Taylor, Liquor, New York City; Judd & Gates, Grocers, Garrettsville, Ohio; Charles W. Ream, Canton, Ohio. Ream

is listed as a clerk in 1888 and in 1892 Canton directories but there is a reference to him as a grocer in the August 15, 1895, *Stark County Democrat*. He was operating his grocery as late as 1920, however. Homer Judd is listed as a grocery clerk in the 1900 census but nothing else is known regarding him and nothing is known regarding Mr. Gates. Perhaps the most intriguing of these is the advertising jug for J. T. Dickerson. Joseph T. Dickerson was born in Harrison Co., Ohio, in 1851 and, like his father, became a grocer. In 1870 and 1880 he was still in Short Creek Township, Harrison Co., but by 1892 is listed as a grocer in Salem, Ohio. Dickerson died May 28, 1898, aged 46 years, and was buried in Cadiz, and his widow returned there a few years later. This means that these Stiles advertising jugs could have

been made only between 1892 and early 1898. We might infer they were promotional pieces made shortly after he



Joseph T. Dickerson, wife Isobel and daughter Anna (Courtesy Ross Martin)

began the store in Salem. Although there is a slight overlap of a few months between the establishment of the Cleveland Pottery Co. and Dickerson's death, it seems more likely that his Recherche Ware jugs were produced by the earlier Stiles Slanting Spout Co.

## **Conclusion**

Stephen Stiles died June 3, 1898, leaving his houses and lots and shares in the "S.S.S. Co." to his sister Edith. To his nephew Henry he left his silver tankard; his silver spoons, sugar tongs and toast rack went to his niece Edith C. French, and \$50 to Henry's wife Ellen. Edith and Henry were the executors and reported (June 18, 1898) that the estate consisted of 82 shares of stock in the Cleveland Pottery Co., no more than \$300 in cash, and one lot on Miles Avenue.



While Sullivan asserts that Henry Stiles disappears from the Cleveland City directories, this is not quite correct, for Stiles is listed in the 1908 directory as a tinner at the corner of Miles and Leonard. Stiles is also listed as a potter in the 1900 federal census, living at 225 Miles Avenue-- so that we may assume that his patent jugs were still being produced at that time, in one form or another, by the Cleveland Pottery Co. By 1901, however, he is again employed as a tinner, his career as a potter apparently ended, living at 6213 Utica Avenue NE. In fact, as early as March 1904, when he applied for one last patent, though still living on Miles Avenue, it appears that he was back to metal-working, for the patent (No. 830,022) was for a metal hinge. Cleveland directories continue to list him as a tinner, solderer, or stove mounter, through the 1920s and as late as 1928.

Stiles died in 1943, predeceased by his wife Ellen (1928) and survived by sons Edward, a machinist, and Ernest, a housepainter.

There was, for many years, another Cleveland Pottery Co., located at Brooklyn Station with plant at Independence, but contrary to Sullivan's assertion, this was not a metamorphosis of the Stiles firm, which definitely did not "survive Prohibition." According to the September, 1926, issue of *Ceramic Industry*, this latter-day Cleveland Pottery Co. was established with \$50,000 capital to manufacture all kinds of pottery and pottery products including china and earthenware. John and William C. Merkel, Henry Deeks, T. J. Krichner, and Karl K. Witthuhn were

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the incorporators. The Merkel brothers were both florists at Mentor, Ohio, and J. Merkel was listed as president of the Cleveland Pottery Co. during the early 1930s. Deeks and Witthuhn were also florists and Kirchners boasted of being Cleveland's oldest and largest florist. So far as is known, this company made nothing other than redware flower pots. It was operated and owned by Louis J. Friedl, Sr., for many years. Although Friedl is listed as a potter in 1920, there is no available evidence to support Sullivan's claim that he bought the Cleveland Pottery Co. in 1919. The first definite reference to his association with the company is the 1929 *Ceramic Trade Directory*, which lists him as manager and ceramic engineer. By 1935 *Ceramic Industry* listed him as

general manager and part owner. The 1943 *Ceramic Trade Directory* indicates that the company was established in 1921. Initially there were two periodic kilns; an additional periodic kiln and then a tunnel kiln were added by 1943. The plant had an annual capacity of four million flower pots and in 1946 was employing 16 men (Ohio Dept. of Industrial Relations 1948: 133). Friedl died in 1961 but the pottery was continued by his son, Louis, Jr., and widow, Elsie, until displaced by interstate highway construction in the late 1970s. Although Sullivan found no record of it after 1966, the pottery continued after Friedl's death with Louis, Jr. as president and Elsie Friedl as vice-president and treasurer. They are so listed in the 1971-72 Cleveland West Suburban directory.

Today there are no visible remnants of the Stiles Slanting Spout Co. or the Cleveland Pottery at Corlett Station, now known familiarly as Miles. Archaeological surface reconnaissance and four separate occasions has failed to turn up so much as a single sherd of a Stiles jug. It must be said, however, that the area is not conducive to archaeological survey, as much of it is in brush and heavily impacted by the deposition of trash and building debris.

And so, despite the efficacy of Henry Stiles non-gurgling invention and clever-- not to say *recherché*--attempts at design, there is little evidence of his endeavor, other than the few remaining jugs. The company, in fact, seems to have declined rather

quickly, once the novelty of the Recherche jug had dissipated. The apparent concentration on real estate by so many members of the firm probably also distracted them from the gritty reality of managing a pottery. This was a period of rapid growth in the stoneware container industry but even the more sturdy horseshoe jugs produced at the end of the company's life were no competition for more "industrial-strength" containers such as those made by dozens of stoneware potteries in the area of Akron and, for that matter, throughout the United States, wherever suitable clay deposits were available.

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